

# Region 7 Annual Report July 2006—June 2007



*Healthy People Living  
in Healthy Communities*



# Letter from the Health Director



I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2006/2007 Annual Report for Region 7 of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. The purpose of the report is to summarize the services, activities, and accomplishments that make a difference in the daily lives of the residents of Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties.

Each day the public health department affects the lives of many people in many ways. Our staff work to get children immunized, to provide nutritional education and assistance to pregnant women and young children, to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and to stop the spread of infectious diseases. Our food safety inspectors work every day with restaurants and grocery stores to make sure the facility practices safe food preparation and hygiene. And our staff educate the community regarding a variety of health issues so that people living in the Lowcountry can make healthier decisions.

I am confident we are taking steps in the right direction to help everyone in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties to live healthier lives. We plan to continue to emphasize reducing tobacco use, obesity, heart disease, preventing the spread of infectious disease and preparing to handle events that might impact large numbers of our residents.

I hope this report provides insight into the dedication we show in promoting and protecting the health of the community. Together we can make a difference.

John Simkovich, MHA, DDS  
Region 7 Health Director

*The mission of the Region 7 Public Health Office is to promote, protect and improve the health and environment for the citizens of Berkeley, Charleston & Dorchester counties.*

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# How Healthy Are We?

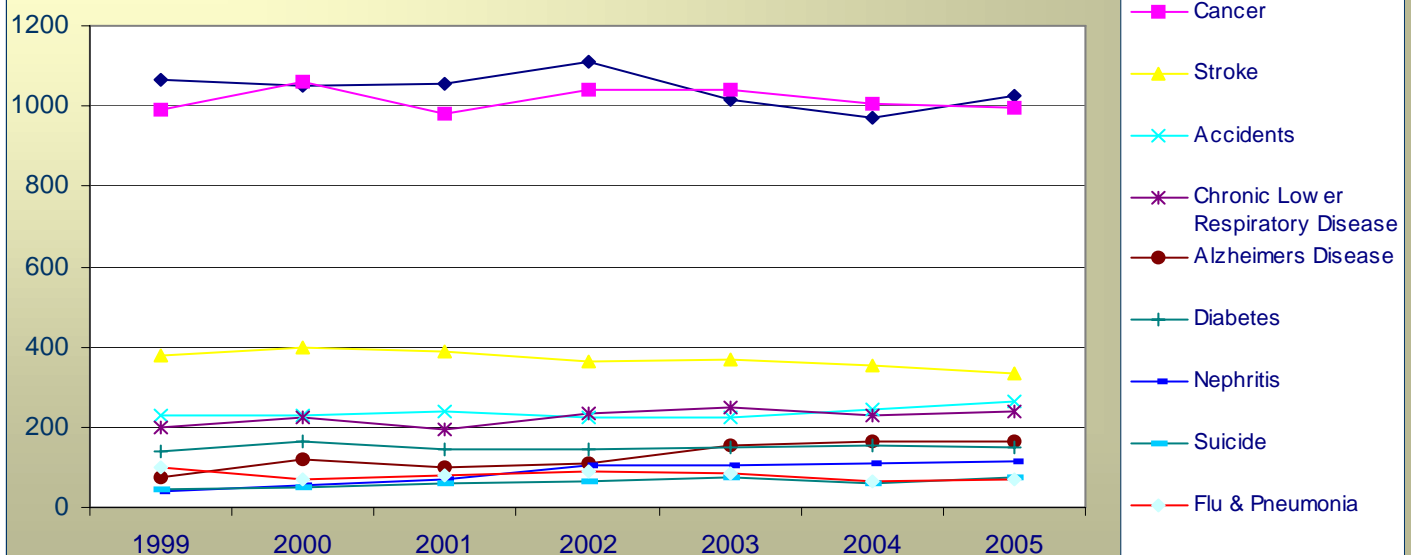
The three leading causes of death in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties are heart disease, cancer and stroke. Included in the ten leading causes of death are also diabetes and flu & pneumonia. All of these diseases have something in common: they are each affected by our behavior.

The state of South Carolina, in coordination with the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), undertakes a Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) each year. The BRFSS is the world's largest random telephone survey of non-institutionalized population aged 18 or older that is used to track health risks in the United States and in our state. This tool provides information about our behaviors that are associated with key health risks.

Health Indicator	2002	2004	2006
Did not participate in any physical activity or exercise other than your regular job during the past month	19.1%	22.3%	19.1%
Been told by your doctor you have diabetes	10.2%	8.4%	8.8%
Body mass group is obese	21.9%	22.2%	27.1%
Did not receive a flu shot in the last 12 months	66.2%	63.6%	69.9%
Females over 18 who have never had a mammogram	38.5%	37.2%	34.5%
Smoke every day	38.6%	15.9%	16.7%

- Physical activity, body mass and smoking each contribute to increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke
- Smoking and mammogram screenings directly impact the incidence of cancer.
- Getting a flu shot each year and a pneumonia shot when indicated directly affect flu and pneumonia as a cause of death

10 Leading Causes of Death



# Community Public Health Services

Region 7 provides many services to the people of Berkeley, Charleston & Dorchester counties in addition to our clinic services. We offer health care to people who cannot leave their homes due to injury or illness, if ordered by a person's doctor. Our Children's Rehabilitative Services (CRS) work with children who have certain long term illness or special needs to make sure they get the care they need. The BabyNet program addresses the needs of all children aged 0 - 3 that are not meeting the typical child development milestones. The program can link the parents of children with the people and services their child needs. We even provide visits to a child's home as a part of the First Steps program in Berkeley & Charleston counties.

Working towards a safe and healthy community, our disease investigation team helps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In order to be better able to respond to potential disasters, we have a Public Health Preparedness program. We also have health educators and social workers out in the community working with schools and churches so that more people have the opportunity to learn about many health concerns.

## Highlights

- ◆ Now in its second year, two of our Region 7 Social Work staff are placed at Berkeley Middle School where they work with students and families to identify and overcome barriers to attending school.
- ◆ Project C.H.E.S.S. is another partnership established by our Social Work staff. Working with the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina & Calvary Episcopal Church we are creating a community health & education support services program. The project is designed to provide programs &/or activities to deal with health problems of citizens, primarily in the 29403 zip code area in the City of Charleston. The goal of the program is to assist people in establishing a medical home, to keep medical appointments, to follow their medical treatment plan & to maintain their best possible health. The focus is to provide medical/health/education support services for persons suffering from chronic diseases.
- ◆ Our staff participated in 50 health fairs and community events, where we provided information about Family Planning, Power to End Stroke, pandemic flu, STD/HIV and CRS/BabyNet.



- ◆ Our health promotion team partnered with Trident SAFE Kids to host "Make It a Safe Summer" community event. Region 7 provided interactive stations that promoted physical activity, sun safety and eating more fruits and vegetables..

- ◆ Over a five year period from FY 03 through FY 07 our BabyNet program was able to increase their active year end case load by over 130% and were able to serve almost 500 children.

- ◆ Our Kids In Motion program, which addresses physical activity and eating fruits and vegetables, continued at four Charleston County Schools.

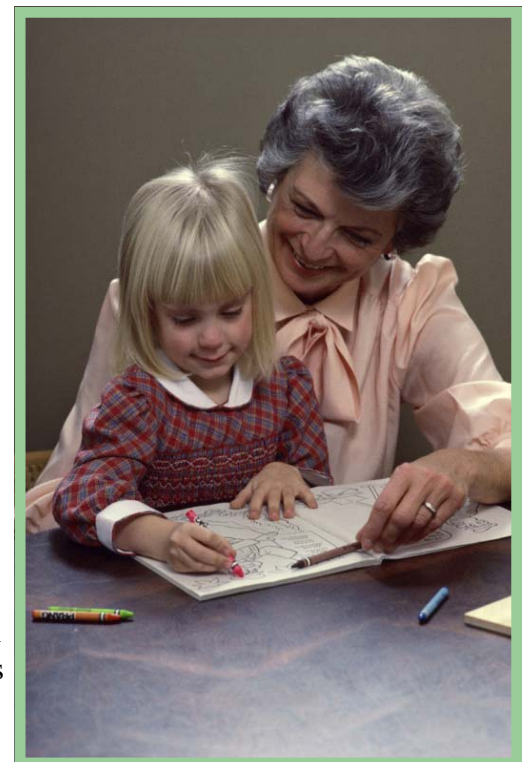
- ◆ CRS/BabyNet worked with Rural Mission to provide training on healthy



eating and physical activity for preschoolers. In conjunction with this we identified children that were at risk for obesity and started intervention processes with families to assist them in choosing ways to reduce these risks. This project will continue into and expand in FY08.



- ◆ Together with the Dorchester County First Steps program we expanded a pre-school curriculum that emphasizes physical activity and eating more fruits and vegetables. We provided training to 110 pre-school and day care providers.
- ◆ Region 7 staff, in conjunction with Smokefree Lowcountry Coalition, promoted a “Quit & Win” promotion to help people to quit smoking. There were 93 people who enrolled in the program and 32 who quit. But the campaign was far more reaching than the promotion alone. Local television station WCSC Live 5 maintained a link to the campaign for five weeks. There were almost 250,000 hits to the Quit & Win website from the stations link. These hits represent a possible first step toward behavior change.
- ◆ The STD/HIV program in the region focused much of their community efforts during the year on minority audiences. Syphilis, HIV and Chlamydia testing was provided on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in February, and in observance of National HIV Testing Day in June.
- ◆ Flu shots are provided as both a community service and as a personal health service in our clinics. Unfortunately, many people who should get a flu shot each year do not. We gave about 46% fewer shots in FY 07 than we did in FY 06 and had to return thousands of unused doses of vaccination.
- ◆ Region 7 received the Public Health Ready designation from the National Association of County & City Health Officers (NACCHO). The program recognizes local excellence in three areas: planning for emergency preparedness; developing a competent workforce; and conducting exercises that simulate emergencies. Region 7 is one of only 138 local public health departments around the country to be honored with this designation
- ◆ Norovirus was the cause of two small outbreaks, one in a nursing home and the other at a college. Our Epi team worked closely with the facilities to help prevent the illness from spreading.
- ◆ In April our Epi Team was involved when a Super Kmart employee tampered with three packages of ground meat. K mart recalled all packages of the meat sold at the store during the time affected. All three of the tainted packages were returned. Lab testing confirmed that the employee had placed Decon rat poisoning very obviously in the ground meat packages. There was no customer illness associated with the incident.
- ◆ At the start of flu season in the fall of 2006, Region 7 held large vaccination clinics on two Saturdays. The goal was not only to provide as many flu shots as possible to the community. It was also a test of our plans that would be implemented when a pandemic or other public health emergency occur.
- ◆ A series of five community meetings providing pandemic influenza preparedness and planning education were held for representatives from residential care facilities, hospitals and clinics, churches, educational institutions, emergency response agencies. An initial meeting was held in August of 2006 that was open to anyone in the community.
- ◆ Region 7 Public Health Preparedness Program began development of the Lowcountry Medical Reserve Corp. during the fiscal year. This group received its federal recognition in December of 2006. Additionally, Region 7 Public Health Preparedness wrote for and received grant funding from NACCHO to support development of this program.
- ◆ In February of 2007 ConAgra Foods announced that it had taken the precautionary measure of voluntarily recalling all varieties of Peter Pan Peanut Butter and Great Value Peanut Butter beginning with product code 2111 because the products were linked to the foodborne illness salmonella. Of the 12 cases of salmonella in SC linked to the recall of peanut butter, two were from Region 7. Staff received numerous calls regarding the product. We also manned phone banks twice for a local TV station so their viewers could call into the station and ask questions about the peanut butter, as well as baby food, chicken and cantaloupes which all had recalls around the same time.



# Environmental Public Health Services

Our Environmental Health staff provide a number of very valuable services. These services are often behind the scenes, but they help ensure that people in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties can be confident that the restaurants they eat in have proper food safety and hygiene practices. We can also take for granted that diseases that are carried by insects or animals are monitored and that septic systems are correctly permitted and installed so that sewage is properly disposed of so as not to spread disease. The total of the Region 7 staff that works in our Environmental health area represent 10% of all staff in the region.

## Highlights

- ♦ The Region 7 Food Safety program implemented an electronic food inspection and surveillance system. Our staff use the equipment to conduct routine inspections and can now more efficiently enter, store and retrieve information about food service establishments.
- ♦ One of our Region 7 Environmental Health program managers began working with our local United Way and DSS organizations by supplying them with DHEC information that is of interest to day care operators.
- ♦ As the three counties that make up Region 7 continue to add new residents and new development, our wastewater program staff conducted over 15,000 field service calls related to septic systems. This is up just over 4% from the previous year.
- ♦ We experienced an overall decrease in the number of food safety inspections due to continued staff shortages. For over two years we have continually been recruiting new staff to replace those retiring and moving to other positions within the division



- ♦ Region 7 sent 12 birds to the DHEC laboratory to test for West Nile virus. This year was the first time in six years that none of the birds tested positive. However, we did have a total of 32 mosquito pools in Charleston and Dorchester that tested positive as well as one person and our vector control Environmental Health staff made a total of 150 field service calls, the most since 2003.



# Personal Public Health Services

Region 7 continued to operate eight clinic locations in FY07; two in Berkeley County, four in Charleston County, and two in Dorchester County. At our clinics we provide individual appointments for a range of public health services, but not all services are available at all clinics. We provide the vaccinations that children need to attend school and daycare. Our Family Planning program offers comprehensive services to help plan future families. An appointment for family planning includes a physical exam, pregnancy testing, and contraceptives if desired. Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, continue to be a public health concern. To address those problems we provide treatment and follow up testing for diagnosed patients so that we can help to reduce the spread of the diseases. And the S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control manages 95% of all Tuberculosis cases in the state.

The Women's, Infants & Children's Nutrition program (WIC) is a federal program under the US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). In South Carolina, the Dept. of Health & Environmental Control coordinates and administers the WIC program for the USDA. This program provides extra food and healthy food facts for pregnant women, women who have just had a baby, and children from birth to age 5. The eligibility for the program depends on income and family size.

In addition to the personal services provided at our clinics, our Home Health program provides skilled care for people who cannot leave their homes due to illness or injury. The services must be ordered by an individual's physician and include home visits by nurses and therapists.

Region 7 staff providing clinic services represent just over 50% of the total staff of the region. Our Home Health program represents approximately an additional 9%, meaning that 59% of our total employees are working to provide individual services.

## Highlights

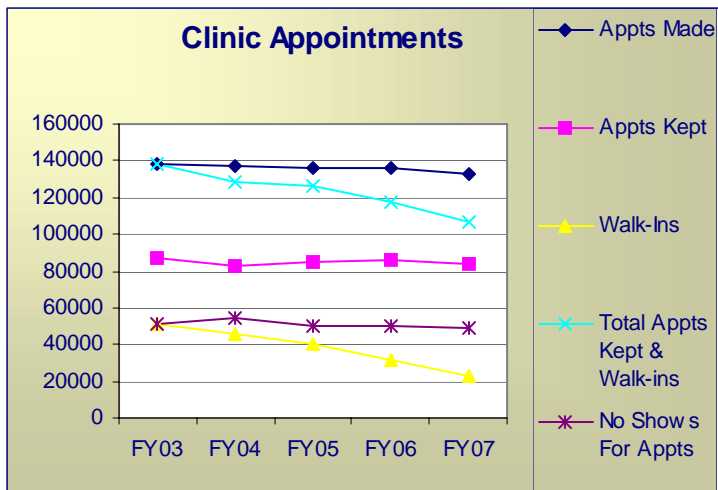
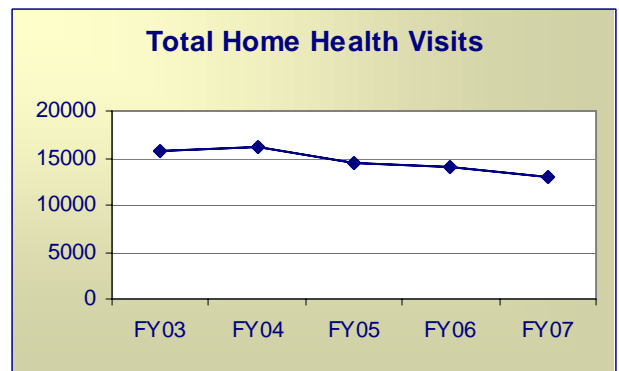
- ◆ Region 7 implemented a central appointment line to improve service to clients wanting an appointment at one of our clinic locations.
- ◆ The total number of visits to our clinics for family planning services has increased by 28% over the five year period FY03 - FY07.

- ◆ Use of the Medicaid Waiver to cover family planning costs is used by the largest number of our clients, at almost 41%. Over 28% of our clients are able to obtain services at no costs.





- ◆ The Region 7 family planning program saw 3,202 new clients in FY07.
- ◆ Approximately 61% of our family planning clients are aged 20 - 29.
- ◆ The staff in our Tuberculosis (TB) program are spending more time than ever outside of the clinics with external visits representing 55% of all our TB program visits. The need for directly observed therapy among TB patients represents the majority of visits outside of the clinics.
- ◆ Total TB visits have decreased since 2004. The largest drop was in 2005 when some patients which meet very strict criteria were treated for a shorter period of time (six months Vs. nine months). Additionally, with the emphasis now on directly observed therapy we can more adequately treat cases.
- ◆ Since their introduction three years ago, the WIC kiosks for nutrition classes have proven to be a great convenience for clients. Although starting just three years ago, they now represent over 47% of all WIC class attendees in the region.
- ◆ The RN who was also our Certified Diabetes Educator retired during the fiscal year. As we did not have anyone to replace her nor sufficient caseload we discontinued diabetes education classes.
- ◆ Demand for immunization services at our clinic continues to decline. Visits for FY07 decreased by 32% over the prior year and 57% over a five year period from FY03 -FY07.
- ◆ The USDA WIC program is an important source of federal funds for the region. Our average caseload in FY07 was 12,142. This means that at any time during the 12 months we were helping over 12,000 people living in the three counties

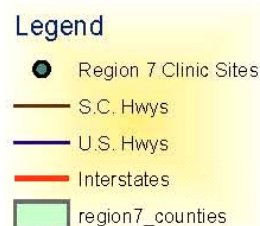


- ◆ Home Health visits decreased by 1,000 visits as compared to FY06.

- ◆ Clinic services over the past several years has evolved towards limiting walk-ins and encouraging clients to make appointments.
- ◆ We continue to experience a high level of “no shows” for appointments made.







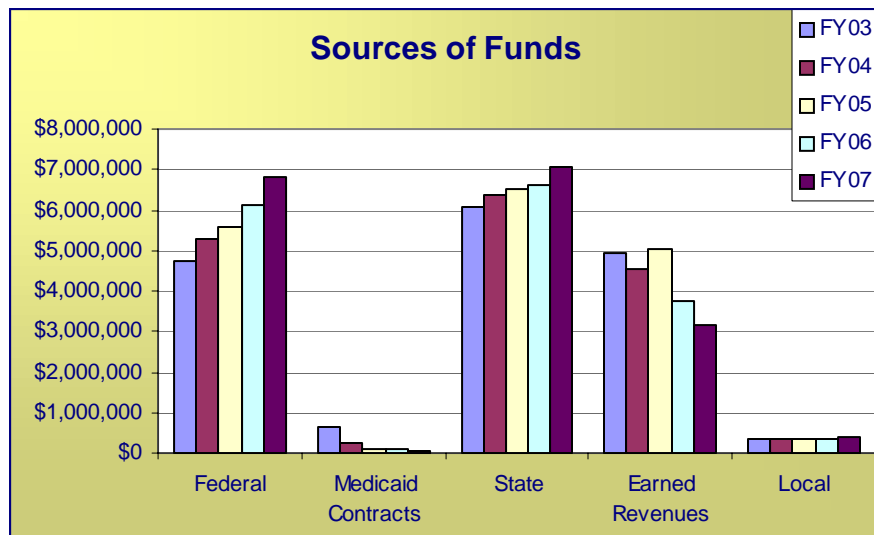
- Summerville Public Health Clinic  
500 N. Main St.  
Summerville, SC 29483

# Financials & Administration

The Administration area of the region is responsible for our financial data, purchasing, travel, human resources, employee benefits, vital records, information technology, billing, supply and oversight of the administrative staff in our clinics.

Our earned revenues continued to decline for the third year, decreasing by 16% over Fiscal Year 2006. This was offset by increases in Federal and State funds.

Personnel represents the most significant cost for the region, representing over 84% of our total budget.



During the fiscal year July 2006-June 2007 the Agency's new clinic services computer system, C.A.R.E.S., was fully implemented at all eight clinics and for all clinic services in Region 7.

Our Vital Records department handles the processing of birth and death certificates for the three counties of Region 7. Vital records data is provided based on a calendar year. For 2006, the three counties reported 9,326 live births.

